



Joint Information Center

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hotline Calling For Donations To Help Nebraskans

Joint Information Center, Grand Island, NE:

The expedited disaster declaration signed by President George W. Bush on Sunday means that funding will become available to assist public entities in their recovery efforts following December's devastating ice storms. Help for individuals, however, is not included in that declaration.

Limited assistance has been made available through other sources. The Nebraska Rural Response Hotline, **(800) 464-0258**, is a free statewide resource for farmers, ranchers, and their families. When a call is made to the Hotline, an experienced staff member will discuss issues and needs, provide helpful information, and refer the caller to available resources. It has quickly become the primary statewide resource for individuals and families with unmet needs resulting from the winter storms.

As of Wednesday afternoon, the requests for assistance made to the Nebraska Rural Response Hotline are significantly beyond the resources available—and dozens of requests are coming in daily. In partnership with the Nebraska VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), The Hotline has coordinated efforts with many volunteer organizations throughout the state, such as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Church World Services, and other voluntary agencies. Through these organizations, some funding assistance has been secured—but more is needed.

The Hotline is sponsored by the Farm Crisis Response Council through Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska. Interchurch Ministries is a participant in Nebraska VOAD (NEVOAD). The NEVOAD is composed of voluntary organizations that serve a role in helping Nebraska citizens during times of disaster by bringing these voluntary organizations together to foster more effective response. In response to the recent storms, the Nebraska VOAD has been conferencing daily for nearly a week, identifying and addressing the unmet needs of Nebraska citizens.

Nebraska VOAD includes American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other voluntary and faith-based organizations, such as Interchurch Ministries, Church World Services, and Adventist Community Services Disaster Response.

Anyone wishing to donate to the recovery effort is encouraged to call the Hotline toll-free number, **(800) 464-0258**. The Nebraska VOAD stresses that monetary donations are being accepted for this effort, but that there is no request or provision for material donations at this time.

Citizens with needs should continue to call the Nebraska Rural Response Hotline at **(800) 464-0258** and speak with a staff member about their specific situation. Callers will be placed on a registry to be matched with available assistance or contacted as more assistance becomes available.